

BELLEVUE NETWORK ON AGING
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

March 5, 2009
8:30 a.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -120

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Robinson, Eileen Rasnack, Berta Seltzer, Dwayne Dilley, Howard Katz, Gary Dickerman, Jullie Gray, Heidi Ressler, Hannah Kimball

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bill Mernman, Bob Megargel, Diana Thompson, Marjorie Todd,

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy VonWald, Alex O'Reilly, Department of Parks and Community Services

OTHERS PRESENT: Barbie Pigott, Kirkland Senior Council; Charlynn Ortiz, Adult Protective Services

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by Chair Robinson who presided. All committee members were present with the exception of Diana Thompson, Marjorie Todd, Bill Mernman, and Bob Megargel.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. February 5, 2009

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted was made by Mr. Dickerman. Second was by Ms. Seltzer and the motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATION

A. Charlynn Ortiz, Investigator, Adult Protective Services

Charlynn Ortiz informed the Network that Adult Protective Services (APS) is located on Airport Way in Seattle and serves all of King County. She said she personally lives on the Eastside and primarily works that area. She explained that anyone calling the office to report an incident of elder abuse first talks to the intake people. All information is held confidential and is never revealed, except at the direction of a court.

Ms. Ortiz said APS operates under the definition of a vulnerable adult as spelled out in RCW 74.34. Vulnerable adults are 60 years old or older and who have the functional, mental or physical inability to care for themselves. The definition of vulnerable adult also applies to anyone over the age of 18 who has a guardian appointed through the Superior Court for reasons of developmental disability or mental retardation which originated prior to age 18.

APS investigates various types of abuse, including abandonment as defined by an inaction or action by a person or entity with a duty of care for a vulnerable adult that results in leaving the person without the means or ability to obtain food, clothing, shelter or healthcare. Abuse is defined as the willful action or inaction that could inflict injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation or punishment on a vulnerable adult. Abuse includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, mental abuse, and exploitation. Exploitation is the act of forcing or exerting undue influence over a vulnerable adult thus causing the person to act in a way that is inconsistent with relevant past behavior, or causing the person to perform services for the benefit of another. Financial exploitation involves the illegal or improper use of property, income, resources, or trust funds of a vulnerable adult for any person's profit or advantage.

APS often is called on to investigate instances of domestic violence or physical abuse on elders. The problem with the system, however, is that the elders rarely want to prosecute, or even admit that anything happened, making the cases very difficult to move forward.

Neglect involves persons with a duty of care. A person with power of attorney for an elder who does not properly provide for the care of a vulnerable adult can be investigated and prosecuted accordingly. Similarly, some who has a relationship with a neighbor who has become dependent on them for food and other necessities cannot simply go on vacation and leave the vulnerable neighbor on their own without being held liable under the neglect rules.

Self-neglect is defined as the failure of a vulnerable adult not living in a facility to provide for himself or herself the goods and services necessary for their physical or mental health. Self-neglect generally occurs when a person no longer has the capacity to determine for themselves what their needs are. The state can file guardianship on those who lack capacity. However, people cannot be moved out of their houses against their will; they have the civil right to live in their homes even if they lack capacity.

Answering a question asked by Mr. Katz, Ms. Ortiz said in cases of mental illness persons can become so gravely ill that they are no longer able to care for themselves. APS cannot intervene in cases where the person is under the age of 60; those persons are subject to the mental health system. Anyone 60 years old or over can be referred to the geriatric reassessment team. APS services must be accepted voluntarily; anyone can refuse admittance to an APS representative.

Ms. Ortiz said APS conducts investigations but does not offer case management. When someone calls in and makes a report concerning a vulnerable adult, an investigator is sent out. No appointment is made so the situation can be seen just as it is. Referrals can be made to case management where a need is evident.

Mr. Dilley asked if APS sees more cases of abuse by family members or non-family members. Ms. Ortiz said it is about 50-50.

Mr. Katz asked if APS offers training to caregiver agencies on what to look for in the field. Ms. Ortiz said law enforcement, social workers, school personnel, and individual caregiver providers are required to report instances of abuse. Anyone observing cases of abuse are encouraged to call in and report.

Chair Robinson said she often sees two instances for which reports are not filed. The first involves individuals who are completely sane and fully capable of making their own decisions and who are being abused by a family member but does not want to file a report. The second involves persons who are not fully in control of their faculties and who are being cared for by family members with the best of intentions who do not even realize what they are doing constitutes abuse. Ms. Ortiz said caregivers are mandatory reporters and must file when something is suspected. During the resulting investigation, if the abused person demonstrates that they have the capacity to act on their own behalf and indicates no desire to cause trouble, they are within their legal rights not to.

Ms. Ortiz said caregivers must follow the RCW rules and regulations that apply to their licensure. They are trained with regard to when reports must be filed.

Ms. Rasnack said those within her organization regularly attend training workshops. Most organizations make sure their staff attend training sessions.

Chair Robinson asked what the Network as an organization could do to help promote public awareness of elder abuse. Ms. Ortiz said her office has brochures and materials that could be distributed in the community. Ms. VonWald suggested the best phone number to broadcast is 1-866-END-HARM.

Ms. Ressler pointed out that families are more dispersed than they used to be and there may be a mental health or financial guardian who lives out of state. She asked if APS works with the out of state person if someone local suspects a case of self-neglect. Ms. Ortiz said in some cases guardianship can be awarded to someone else. When the department files for guardianship, the data is sent to the AAG's office and a guardian ad litem is appointed.

Ms. Ressler asked how often someone should be checking on older adults who are on their own. Chair Robinson said it can vary; in some cases a weekly check in is sufficient, while for others daily contact should be made. The important thing is to have actual face time with the person.

Ms. Ortiz provided Ms. VonWald with a values history form for copying and distribution. She said she uses the form when visiting families and it covers all written legal documents and wishes concerning specific medical procedures.

Mr. Dilley asked if the main problem is that the people who need help are not being identified, or that once a problem is identified the persons involved do not want to cooperate. Ms. Ortiz said the latter is the primary problem.

Chair Robinson said her experience in the field has been that abuse is occurring at the hands of people who do not realize they are being abusive. In providing education, it should be stressed that everyone is seeking a supportive and positive outcome, not a punitive one.

Ms. Gray said she has a Power Point presentation on elder abuse and would be willing to share it with the Network. She allowed that the whole issue is a complicated one. Additional legislation is needed to help reduce incidents of elder abuse. People do have the right to act on their own behalf even if that means making bad decisions. Unfortunately, many are determined to have the mental capacity they need to be making sound decisions when in fact they do not have that capacity, and the way the laws are written there are limits placed on those who should intervene.

B. City of Bellevue Services for Older Adults

Ms. VonWald provided the Network members with copies of the Power Point presentation that was developed in 2008 highlighting the city services provided in Bellevue for older adults. She noted that the departments involved with older adults are Parks, Police, Fire, Utilities, and Planning.

Parks has recreation and socialization programs, human services, community dining and meals on wheels, and human services agency funding. Police works on issues such as elder abuse, personal safety and identity theft. Fire works closely with Parks on fall prevention programs, providing smoke detectors, and emergency preparedness. Utilities provides discounts and rebates for low-income residents and people with disabilities. Planning is involved with census and trend analysis, the neighborhood liaison program, neighborhood mediation, capital projects, and city planning initiatives.

BNOA MAINTENANCE

A. PR/Outreach

1. Update

Chair Robinson noted that without a lot of effort, neighborhoods in Bellevue are contacting the Network. That is evidence of the hard work done in 2008. To date the Vuecrest, Lake Hills neighborhoods and the Carlisle condominiums have asked for presentations on the support services available for seniors. She suggested the Power Point should be updated to include information on transportation and housing.

Ms. VonWald suggested that a small subcommittee should be appointed to update the presentation.

Mr. Dickerman thought it would be useful to have a menu of presentations to offer groups who call in. Ms. VonWald suggested including a slide in the Power Point indicating other presentation topics.

Mr. Dilley noted that there is a group of retired federal workers that meets at the North Bellevue Senior Center. He said they are hungry for any kind of decent presentation on topics that affects their group. If there were three or four presentations ready made, it would be an easy thing to go out and meet with groups and share information.

A subcommittee consisting of Chair Robinson, Ms. Kimball, Mr. Dickerman and Ms. Gray was appointed to update the Power Point presentation.

2. Plans for Future Outreach for BNOA

a. Rob McKenna's Presentation

Ms. VonWald said state Attorney General Rob McKenna will be making a presentation in City Hall on March 20. The event has been advertised widely and interest seems to be quite high. BTV will film the presentation for later airing. Councilmembers are being asked about their availability to introduce the speaker.

Ms. VonWald said she promised the Attorney General's office that a list of questions would be sent in prior to the event so there is time to prepare some answers. She asked the Network members to develop questions and email them to her.

b. Active Senior Fair, Westminster Chapel, March 14

Ms. VonWald said the Active Senior Fair is an Overlake Hospital event. The Network on Aging will be sharing a table with the Kirkland Senior Council. She said she would welcome having anyone from the Network participate.

B. Regional Partnerships

Ms. VonWald passed around a sign-up sheet for volunteers to attend the Kirkland Senior Council meetings. She noted that Kirkland is still working to develop its work plan for 2009; it will be shared with the Network as soon as it is finalized. Cathy Iverson, the outreach committee chair for the Kirkland Senior Council, in an email expressed an interest in working jointly with the Network on a yet-to-be defined project, probably other than the Vial of Life project.

Ms. VonWald said the Medic One Foundation is looking for new sponsors for the Vial of Life. They also are going to have a booth at the Northwest Women's Show at the end of

March. To date, they have distributed 30,000 Vials and will be sending out questionnaires to providers to determine how well the project is working. The Foundation is also working with a public relations firm to design and develop a public service announcement to remind everyone to update their forms when they change their clocks in the spring and the fall.

It was agreed that Mr. Katz and Ms. Thompson should represent the Network in working with the Kirkland Senior Council to develop a proposal for a joint project.

Ms. VonWald reported that the Mercer Island Senior Commission has regrouped without several of its original members. They have a new chair and a new staff liaison. The current focus is on developing a scope of action predicated on the task of providing feedback to the community services department on services provided by the parks department. She said she will keep the Network apprised with regard to the progress being made by Mercer Island.

C. Legislative Issues

1. Senior Lobby Day Recap

Ms. VonWald distributed to the Network copies of the Senior Lobby Day agenda put together by the Washington State Senior Lobby. She noted that another Senior Lobby Day is coming up on March 25 and she encouraged members to participate.

Ms. VonWald provided the members with the advocacy piece put together by Aging and Disability Services of Seattle/King County for people to distribute when talking to their legislators.

The legislators were urged not to make additional cuts to senior programs.

2. Housing Trust Fund

Ms. Rasnack reported that she did as directed by the Network and sent an email on behalf of the group urging representatives to maintain the Housing Trust Fund at its current levels. Senator Jarrod responded and indicated his continued support for the Housing Trust Fund. Most representatives say they also support the Housing Trust Fund but always add the caveat that the current economic picture is less than rosy.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Advocacy/Housing and Mobility

Mr. Dilley said the committee met and concluded that it should remain committed to the Bel-Red corridor project. Copies of a thank-you letter drafted for sending to the Planning

Commission thanking them for including affordable housing in their final draft were distributed for approval.

Motion to approve the letter and send it to the Planning Commission was made by Mr. Dilley. Second was by Ms. Seltzer and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Robinson noted that during 2008 the need to have a list of housing options for people over 65 in Bellevue was raised. She suggested that the lists that exist are fractured at best. Ms. VonWald said anyone can search the online resource map for seniors for housing. Chair Robinson suggested it would be helpful for the committee to develop a resource guide for seniors to use on how to use the online service, or who to contact if they do not have access to the internet. Mr. Dilley said he would raise the issue at the next committee meeting.

Mr. Dilley said ARCH director Arthur Sullivan has been invited to address the Network on housing issues, especially Section 8 housing.

On the mobility side, Mr. Dilley said the committee intends to stay plugged into the Easy Rider Collaborative.

Mr. Dickerman pointed out that the hiring of a mobility coordinator has been approved but the funding has not kicked through yet. That person will interface with the Easy Rider group as well as King County Metro and Sound Transit. In addition, a full report for 2008 is being developed. There is also a focus on finding a new project to take on.

With regard to the Sound Transit East Link project, Ms. VonWald noted that while the City Council has made a recommendation to the Sound Transit board, the final decision on what alignment will be used in Bellevue will be up to Sound Transit. She added that because the downtown circulator is a completely different issue, the two topics are not being considered together.

Mr. Dilley said one current trend that could have a big impact on all marketing efforts is the fact that the Hispanic population is the fastest growing segment of the United States population. Large corporations are starting to change their marketing efforts accordingly. Another trend is the fact that nationally someone turns 60 every second; in ten years the over 60 segment of the population will be huge.

Ms. VonWald reported that BTV recently did a program on the Bus Buddy program that will be online in about a week. The Network will be provided with a DVD of the program for its library.

B. Research/Needs Assessment

Ms. Rasnack said the committee met following the February Network meeting and identified the groups to be targeted for the needs assessment. The committee spent time

developing the questions to be asked. The groups that will be contacted about setting up a community conversation are the Latino elders who meet at the North Bellevue Community Center; a group of neighborhood liaisons; a group from a local church; a group of seniors; and a group of East Indians.

C. Education/Safety and Support

Ms. Ressler said the committee at its last meeting continued its review of the Kirkland Senior Council video and how to insert materials to make it appeal to an audience broader than just Kirkland.

Ms. VonWald said she talked with the BTV staff and found that it will be no problem to include an intro and local tag for the video. They also agreed to air the gatekeeper DVD on BTV.

BREAK

STAFF REPORT

Ms. VonWald provided the Network with copies of a handout from the state unit on aging about the federal economic stimulus package and the funding that will flow to the state.

NEW BUSINESS

The Network members will submit questions to ask Attorney General Rob McKenna during his visit to Bellevue on March 20. The questions will be submitted to Howard Katz and will be compiled and sent to the AG's office by March 16th.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS – None

UPCOMING AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. VonWald discussed with the Network upcoming agenda items.

ADJOURN

Chair Robinson adjourned the meeting at 10:28 a.m.